

TWENTY-FIVE YEAR HISTORY OF THE YORKTOWN BAPTIST CHURCH

Vicki Dale Oliver  
October 14, 1973

YORKTOWN BAPTIST CHURCH  
Yorktown, Virginia

Rev. Claud G. Barkley, Pastor

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1973  
SUNDAY SCHOOL, 9:45 A.M.  
MORNING WORSHIP SERVICE, 11:00 A.M.

Organ Prelude  
Invocation and Lord's Prayer  
Doxology  
\*Hymn No.  
Unison Reading  
\*Hymn No.  
Moments of Meditation  
Reading of the Scripture  
Morning Prayer  
Choral Prayer Response  
In The Master's Service  
\*Hymn No.  
Worship with Tithes and Offering  
Offertory  
Worship in Music... "Choir"  
SERMON: "The Suffering Servant"  
Invitation  
Benediction  
Organ Postlude

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SERVING DEACON: Mr. Chester Copes,  
NURSERY WORKERS FOR TODAY:  
Mrs. Janice Oliver  
Miss. Vickie Oliver

CHURCH - THE SUNDAY NIGHT PLACE

Church in Training, 6:00 P.M.  
Evening Worship Service, 7:00 P.M.

Organ Prelude  
Invocation  
\*Hymn No.  
Period of Meditation  
Prayer  
Announcements  
\*Hymn No.  
Offertory  
Worship in Music... "Choir"  
SERMON: "At The Lord's Table"  
Invitation  
OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER  
Benediction  
"Blest Be the Tie"

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OPPORTUNITIES OF THE WEEK:

Mon: 4:00 P.M. GA Meeting  
Wed: 7:00 P.M. Prayer Meeting  
7:00 P.M. Youth Prayer Meeting  
7:30 P.M. Choir Practice  
Thurs: 7:00 P.M. Steering Committee Meeting

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Gleaner's Class will have their class meeting  
on Tuesday Night with Mrs. Ruth Ramsey.

York High School annual back to school night on  
Monday, October 8 at 7:30 P.M.  
You are invited to attend and bring child's  
schedule.

*A Cordial Welcome*

# Yorktown Baptist Church

YORKTOWN, VIRGINIA

Claud G. Barkley

Pastor

P. O. Box 248

Phone

887-5018

&

887-5668



WELCOME!!

To all who are weary and seek rest to all who mourn and long for comfort; to all who struggle and desire victory; to all who sin and need a Saviour; to all who are idle and look for service; to all who are strangers and want fellowship; to all who hunger and thirst after righteousness; and to whomsoever will come—this Church opens wide her doors and offers her welcome.

In THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST HER LORD  
You Are Cordially Invited to Attend these Services:

**SUNDAY**

Bible School — 9:45 a.m.

Morning Worship — 11:00 a.m.

Training Union — 6:30 p.m.

Evening Worship — 7:30 p.m.

**WEDNESDAY**

Prayer Service — 7:00 p.m.

Tear off Here and Keep

**IF YOU LIVE OUT OF CITY**

Name .....

Street .....

City ..... State .....

Church Membership? ..... What Church? .....

Remarks: .....

- ☐ I am interested in uniting with this Church.
- ☐ I should like to enroll in the Sunday School.
- ☐ I should like to talk with the Pastor.

**EVERY VISITOR AN HONORED GUEST**

(See Other Side)

**WELCOME!!**

## Twenty-five Year History of the Yorktown Baptist Church

In 1699 there lived in Yorktown a Baptist Minister by the name of Thomas Bonger. This is known from the journal of a Quaker, Thomas Storey, who wrote in his journal under the date January 1699, "On the 23th, being the first of the week, we had a meeting in York City at the house of one, Thomas Bonger a preacher among the general Baptist, and it was the first meeting of our friends that had been held there." Although there is this record of Thomas Bonger being in Yorktown, there is no record of an early church being established here.

The first church established in the area was the Grafton Baptist Church, established in 1777, 4 years before the surrender of Lord Cornwallis, and continued as a Baptist Church until the year 1832. At that time the Dover Association (of which the Grafton Baptist Church was a part) indicated that any church with a minister who preached the doctrines of M Alexander Campbell could not be a member of the association. Cambell held that a person had to be baptized to be saved, which was, of course, contrary the Baptist belief.

The congregation meeting in Grafton voted to keep their pastor, Rev. Peter Ainslie, a Scotsman. This meant that they were no longer a part of the Baptist Fellowship. Those who wanted to remain within the Baptist Fellowship had to leave, so they went to Harris Grove in 1832 and built a church there. This building was used up until 1859. During the war between the states the Union forces came in and took over the church to use as a hospital and later as a stable (some have said). The old communion set that was being used there was taken be one of the ladies of the church and hidden until after the war was over. This communion set is now in Richmond in the historical society room of the library of the University of Richmond. Before the Union forces left they burned the church to the ground. The congregation decided not to rebuild on this site but to go up the road a way to Hornsbyville and there in 1879 built a small building which is still standing in 1973. The congregation met there until 1915 when because of contention in the church the work ceased.

In 1938 Dr. Herman Stevens came into the area as pastor of the Orcutt Avenue Baptist Church in Newport News. Someone wanted to buy the old church building at Hornsbyville and they came to the Peninsula Association. There



were those in the association who wanted to sell it. Dr. Stevens went to the building, looked at it and deciding that there should be a Baptist church there, secured the help of the remaining deacon, J. Sam Hogg, Charles Harper, Jesse Shields, (a Methodist steward) and some others. They repaired the building, put a new roof on it, and started to work with a small group meeting in the church each Sunday afternoon. After Dr. Stevens some other ministers served the church. One pastor, Rev. Carl Lewis, had a church in Buckroe for a while, but on Sunday afternoon he would come to Hornsbyville to preach in the church. However, the work did not go forward as the Board of Missions and Education in Richmond felt that it should so in the latter part of 1944 they sent Rev. Scott Hutton here to look at the situation and see what should be done. He felt that the church should move into Yorktown. A vote of the membership was taken to see if the Grafton Baptist Church would meet in Yorktown and the church voted to do so. But the next Sunday a group who lived in the area of Hornsbyville asked that they vote again and they be allowed to continue having services in Hornsbyville. This in December 1944 a small group came and began worshipping in the Yorktown Elementary School. The others continued to meet in the building in Hornsbyville. The church meeting in Yorktown was the Grafton Baptist Church and the group meeting in Hornsbyville was the Mission of the Grafton Baptist Church.

Rev. Claud Barkley of Portsmouth was asked to supply one Sunday when Rev. Scott Hutton had to be away. Rev. James Bryant was executive secretary of the Virginia Baptists at that time and he asked Rev. Barkley to come to fill in for Rev. Hutton. This was his introduction to the Yorktown Baptist Church. God laid the work of the church on his heart for there were people here who were interested in serving the Lord. They felt that there needed for a Baptist witness in Yorktown and were doing everything that they could to establish the work here. And so, having prayed about Rev. Barkley accepted the call of the church and he began his work here on February 1, 1945.

At that time there were 35 members meeting in the elementary school in Yorktown and 25 members meeting in the church building in Hornsbyville. Sunday School was held in the morning at 10:00 and the morning worship service at 11:00 in Yorktown. In the afternoon there was Sunday School at 2:30 and worship service at 8:00. The meetings continued in the Yorktown school morning and evening until the summer time. Then it was found that services could not

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be held in the evening because the school did not have screens and the mosquitos came in. When it appeared that the services would have to be discontinued the Methodist church offered the use of their building on Sunday evenings. They were having services only on the 1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays and so they offered the use of their church on the 2nd and 4th Sunday evenings. The Baptist went to the services when the Methodist minister was in charge and the Methodist people came when Rev. Barkley led the services. For a period of about two years the Yorktown Baptist Church met in the sanctuary of the Crooks Memorial Methodist Church.

After that the church met in the Yorktown Elementary School for 11 months from February through December of 1945. During the Christmas holidays some water was left running and it was felt that it would be better if the church met some other place. After looking around a small building on Church Street which was being used for storage by Mr. Merton Williams, (known in the community as "Preacher Williams"). The building had been a shoe shop. The church members were told that they could use it, and they took down a partition between two rooms to make a room that was a little larger, (but even then it was a small room). Some theater chairs were secured and a low pulpit platform was built. An old Reed Organ which had been used down in the Hornsbyville Church was brought in. The building was painted and wall paper was put up on the inside and a dividing curtain so that there could be two Sunday School classes inside the building. Mr. Roland Oliver ran a bus to Cooks Terrace and the Annex area to bring in people. One of the Sunday School classes met in this bus, which was used for transportation.

The building would seat only 39 people and when more than 39 were in the congregation some of the men had to sit on the edge of the pulpit platform. The ceiling was quite low and when it was very warm it was impossible to stand on the pulpit platform with the pastors head so close to the ceiling.

When Rev. Barkley came here in 1945 it was impossible to buy a new automobile but he was finally able to buy a second hand 1937 Plymouth Coupe for \$100.00. This car served him faithfully. Soon after he moved here he organized an RA Group of boys. They began to play baseball and out of it evolved a baseball team. There were as many as 25 boys on the baseball team, at one time. With only the coupe to take them around, he



would use a piece of lumber to hold the trunk open and pile boys in the back and on the front seat until the car was right down on the rear axle. He had as many as 13 boys in that Plymouth taking them around to various places to play baseball. The other churches in the area heard of his baseball team so the Grafton boys got together and organized a team; then the boys in Dare decided to have a team, and the boys in Seaford and some in Dandy. This gave a rather informal little league and one summer the Yorktown Baptist boys played each of the other teams and beat each of them two out of three games, which made them champions of their league.

Rev. Barkley and his Plymouth and the boys would go back in the Park Service areas where they could cook dinner or they would go down to the Mariners Museum. One time there were so many that he couldn't put them all in his coupe. Mrs. Nannie Parcell took a group down and he took the rest and they spent the day down there. That old Plymouth Coupe served well and many people in Yorktown remember seeing it going by piled high with boys.

During his first year in Yorktown each morning Rev. Barkley would go down the hill to the boarding house where he ate his meals and he noticed in the mornings, the sun coming up over the river. As Easter approached, he thought of how wonderful it would be to have a sunrise service. One Sunday morning he asked the congregation if they would like to have an Easter sunrise service. They also decided to ask the other churches in the area to participate and so in 1945, on Easter Sunday morning Yorktown had her first sunrise service at the Victory Monument.

At that time the minister of the Methodist Church in Yorktown was Rev. Mack Thomasson. He pastored the Crooks Memorial Methodist Church in Yorktown, the Zion Methodist Church in Seaford, and the Providence Methodist in Dare. The Episcopal Church's pastor was Rev. Alfred Alley, who was also the Red Cross Director for York County. These churches and pastors began the community sunrise service in 1945 and from that time on there have been Easter sunrise services each year except 1968 and 1970 when they were rained out. The pastor, Brother Thomasson in the Methodist church stayed one year. When he left Rev. M. H. Barton came to be the pastor of the Methodist churches and Rev. Barkley came to know Rev. and Mrs. Barton very well. Together they developed, not only the sunrise service but a community communion service on Thursday night in the banquet room of the Yorktown Masonic Hall and a three hour service on Good Friday starting at 12 o'clock and lasting until 3 p.m.

using the minister in the local churches and then some other Peninsula ministers for there was not enough local ministers to participate in all of the seven sayings of Christ. Thus Yorktown had these three cooperative religious services for a number of years; the community communion service, the three hour service on Good Friday, and the Easter Sunrise Service.

The work of the church continued to grow as people continued moving into the area. However, the church could not construct a building because the war production board would not grant permission for securing materials. However, in 1946 the government offered one of two surplus military chapels. One was located in Camp Hill on Jefferson Avenue, the other was a chapel at Langley Field. Both chapels were inspected and it was determined that the one on Jefferson Avenue would be the easiest to have brought and erected in Yorktown. A contract was made with the Company of Enderbrock and White to take this chapel down, piece by piece and bring it to Yorktown and pull all the nails and stack it. Out of this Army chapel the church realized enough lumber to put in the firders, floor joist, sub-flooring, flooring, some of the studying, some of the sheathing and all of the scaffolding that was needed for constructing the church building. There was also a large coal fired boiler, pipes headers and some radiators. In all at that time it would value about \$5,000.00. The government granted the chapel free simple. The Monday morning that Rev. Barkley went to the Minister's Conference and reported that the church had secured a chapel, Dr. Herman Stevens, who was interested in the work of this church ( and many other churches) wanted to know what chapel had been secured. He was told that it had been the chapel at Camp Hill. He asked, "Well, Son, how much did you have to pay for it?" And Rev. Barkley replied, "Nothing, it was given to us free simple." At that he stood to his feet and said, "You got it for nothing, why I offered them \$2,000 for that chapel and they wouldn't give it to me." "Well," he was told, "they gave it to us for nothing."

The material was brought to Yorktown and stored, Enderbrock and White brought equipment up and began digging the basement out. They had not been in the business very long, in fact, the construction of the Yorktown Baptist Church was the first major contract that they had recieved. The only piece of equipment that they owned was an old second hand pick-up truck. They had to rent all of the other equipment that was needed, the crane that was used for demolishing the chapel and the trucks for bringing the material up and

the equipment that was used for digging the basement.

They began digging the basement in December 1946 and in the early part of January 1947 there was some very hard rain and the big crane digging out the basement was trapped in the excavation. For a while it looked as though they were not going to be able to get the equipment out and Rev. Barkley told them that perhaps they could just let it sink on down into the mud and then put the floor right over the top of the boom. The weather finally moderated and they were able to get the equipment out and continue with construction of the church. During this period in 1946 and part of 1947 the congregation was meeting in the little building on Church Street. The attendance was growing and there was not enough room. The pastor prevailed upon the contractor to let the meet in the basement of the building even though it was far from being completed. Each Saturday a family of the church went to the church and cleaned up the basement so that the congregation could meet. It was quite a task because the dust and dirt from the work upstairs had come through the sub-flooring, down into the basement.

There were many people who showed an interest in the building. When Dr. and Mrs. Herman Bailey and their family came down from Richmond on some weekends they would always come to church and would always bring their house guests. One Sunday morning when they came to church they brought 18 people with them and this was a good part of the congregation that morning. Meetings continued in the basement of the church until October 19, 1947 when it became possible to hold services upstairs in the main sanctuary.

Before the building was completed and soon after they had made the arch over the Baptistry, a friend of Rev. Barkley's, Mr. Leonard Harrel, came by early one morning and he saw the pastor going into the building. Mr. Leonard Harrel, was going back to Portsmouth from Mathews County and the road by the church was one of the main roads often used in going from Yorktown into

Newport News. He came into the building and saw the Baptistery arch. He said that he had a picture in the storage room of his store that might be of use to the church and suggested that Rev. Barkley should come to the store and see the painting. He went over and saw the picture of Christ which now stands in the Baptistery. It was in the custody of a man that Rev. Barkley had known as a boy. He was an engineer for the fire department in the city of Portsmouth and said that he would be glad for the church to have it. The picture was painted by Mr. Frank Watson who is the master painter in the Norfolk Navy Yard. He did a number of paintings including three large paintings similar to this one. One of them is in a church in Washington, D.C., and it is not known where the other one is today. Rev. Barkley borrowed Mr. Oliver's pick-up truck and Sonny Oliver, (who was just a boy), George Dumas and Moty Dumas went over in the truck and brought the picture back. The picture had been put up in a storage room which had been an assembly hall at one time. After the picture was put up there, some changes were made in the stairs. For a while it looked as though they were going to have to take the large windows out of the front of the building and lower the picture down, but it was finally found that they could take the frame apart and bend the picture a little bit and get it down the stairs and on the truck. When they came across the James River Bridge it was blowing almost a gale and they had a hard time holding onto the picture to keep it from flying off of the truck. It was stored in the basement and kept covered with pieces of canvas until the work upstairs was finished and the picture put in its place over the Baptistery.

When the sanctuary was completed the church could not afford pews, however, some folding chairs were secured from a church over on the Eastern Shore. Some men of the church went over in pick-up trucks and brought back



a hundred of these chairs in groups of two and three. A steam cleaning unit was used to steam off the old varnish and then they were finished with a clear sealer. These chairs are still being used in Sunday School rooms today.

At that time the church could not afford an organ and a piano was used for the worship service. There was no carpet on the floor and the pulpit stand was made from a reading desk that had come from an old Episcopal church in Gloucester. One of the carpenterw who was a cabinet maker followed some plans that were given him, remade this reading desk into the pulpit stand which is in use today. The communion table was made by Mr. Naylor using material from the top of the altar of the Army chapel. The railing that had been used in the chapel around the altar is now being used as a railing on the steps to the balcony.

After a time Rev. Barkley's old pastor in Protsmouth found an old Reed Organ that had belonged to an Episcopal church in Norfolk. They were getting a new organ and they gave it to the church if someone would go over for it. Some of the men went over in a pick-up truck and brought it and placed it in the church. This was used in the services in church until some years later when it was possible for the church to secure the Conn organ which is now in use. The Reed Organ was given back to Rev. Barkley who now has it. After a time the church was able to purchase the pews and the carpeting, and venetian blinds were given by members at separate times to beautify the sanctuary. When the congregation was able to meet in the sanctuary and ahve room for Sunday School the work began to grow. During 1945, and 1946 and 1947 Vacation Bible School was held with the Methodist church in their building. However, in 1948, with the completion of a larger building and adequate class rooms, it was decided to have Vacation Bible School in the Yorktown Baptist Church. The member of the Episcopal church were asked



to come in as were the people from the Nelson Chapel of the Navel Weapons Station. The first Vacation Bible School in the church in 1948 had 133 children enrolled. This was a cooperative Christian effort using workers from the Methodist church, the Episcopal church, the Weapons Station, as well as the people of the Baptist church. There were so many children enrolled that it was necessary for them to have one way traffic. Those leaving the sanctuary to go into the basement to go back to the sanctuary went out of the door of the boiler room or the other rear exit of the basement and up the outside stairs.

The work of the church began with 35 members meeting in Yorktown in February of 1945. When the work was begun on the sanctuary in December 1946 there were 44 members in the church with an average attendance of 22 at church and Sunday School. The church had accumulated \$5,000.00 toward the erection of a sanctuary but found it necessary to borrow \$22,000.00 to complete the work. Thus, the church building cost about \$27,000.00 not including the \$5,000.00 worth of material that was secured from the Army chapel.

In 1954 after Rev. Barkley had been here for nine years he felt the need to submit his resignation to return to the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. The church in voting upon it ten days later asked that he not resign, but take a leave of absence for the year of study and then return. At the time he tendered his resignation he had two hundred dollars in cash, an automobile that was paid for, and a lot of faith in the Lord's leadership. The church asked that he take a leave of absence. He was given money and the church kept him on the payroll at \$30.00 a month. When he came home at Christmas time and spring vacation the church would pay him

and put him back on his regular salary. Through the interest and generosity of the people in the church he was able to go to Southern Seminary, earn another degree and return without owing any money.

It was while a student at Southern Seminary that he married Miss Dorothy Wallace. She had been the assistant to the pastor of the Jackson Memorial Baptist Church in Portsmouth and they had been going together for some time. Unknown to her, Rev. Barkley had made application to Southern Seminary and she had recieved a call from her former pastor asking her to come to Louisville to be the Baptist Student Union Director for the nurses of the Kentucky Baptist Hospital in Lousville, Kentucky, and to be his assistant. So she went to Louisville on September 1, 1954 and he arrived on September 15 or 17. They were married the following May and they returned to Yorktown the first of August 1955.

While Rev. Barkley was away the church added rooms on the back of the building. The congregation had hoped to have it all done when he returned but encountered difficulties with the contractor. The matter dragged along for months and finally the church had to get someone else to come in and finish the work.

The work continued to grow and the building soon filled up again and there was just not room for the people. One of the new rooms was used for a primary department and it had to be divided into three sections. There were 35 children in this small room that divided into three parts. It was felt that there needed to be an educational building and plans were drawn up. After some time construction was begun on the education building that is next to the sanctuary. This building was completed in 1963. In 1960 the church built a parsonage out on the Moore House Road so there is now a sanctuary, a parsonage and the educational building.